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PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

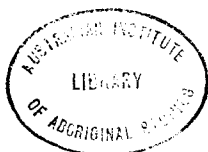
# REPORT

of the

## ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD

for Year ended 30th June, 1949

Presented to Parliament in pursuance of the provisions of Section 19B of the Aborigines Protection Act, 1909-1943



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# Report of the Aborigines Welfare Board, New South Wales, for the Year ended 30th June, 1949.

The Aborigines Welfare Board presents to the Honourable the Chief Secretary this Report on its work during the year ended 30th June, 1949, together with information on the care and general welfare of the aborigines resident within the State of New South Wales during that period.

## THE BOARD.

During the year five meetings of the Board were held. The attendance of members was—

Mr. S. L. Anderson (Chairman) .....	5
Superintendent B. H. Blackley .....	2
Dr. J. Grahame Drew .....	5
Professor A. P. Elkin .....	4
Mr. William Ferguson .....	4
Mr. J. P. Glasheen .....	3
Mr. S. R. Heferen, M.L.A. ....	1
Mr. A. W. G. Lipscomb .....	4
Superintendent B. E. Sadler .....	1
Mr. Michael Sawtell .....	5
The Honourable E. G. Wright, M.L.C. ....	4

By virtue of his position as Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, and in accordance with the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act, Mr. S. L. Anderson occupied the position of Chairman of the Board throughout the year. Professor A. P. Elkin was again elected as Vice Chairman.

Superintendent B. E. Sadler attended his last meeting as a member of the Board on the 17th August, 1948, consequent upon his retirement from the Police Department. Superintendent B. H. Blackley succeeded him as representative of his Department.

Mr. A. W. G. Lipscomb, as Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare, is Executive Member of the Board. The Act provides that the Superintendent and other members of the Board should pay regular visits to Aboriginal Stations and Children's Homes throughout the State to maintain personal contact with the aborigines and obtain first-hand knowledge of their problems and needs. This requirement was observed, with much benefit and interest, to the aboriginal residents as well as to the visitors.

Of the eleven members of the Aborigines Welfare Board, one must be a full-blood aborigine and one either a full-blood or a person apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood. These representatives, who are elected by the aboriginal people, serve on the Board for three years and are eligible for re-election.

The term of office of the two aboriginal members, Messrs. Walter Page and William Ferguson, expired on 5th July, 1948. Mr. Ferguson, who is a quarter-caste, was re-elected unopposed. No nomination was received for the vacant office of full-blood aboriginal and the seat is still vacant.

## BOARD'S POLICY.

An important objective of the Board is to assist aborigines to prepare for eventual assimilation into the white community. A prerequisite to acceptable assimilation of any aborigine into the general community life is good housing and home management. The Board feels that the modern cottages now being provided will assist in this regard and give the aboriginal people a feeling of self-respect. A considerable advance in this direction was made during the last twelve months, an extensive re-building programme being put under way, including the re-housing of a complete community group in attractive modern cottages at the Murrin Bridge Aboriginal Station. These aspects are covered in some detail elsewhere in this report.

The Board considers that progress has also been made during the last few years in breaking down antipathy and colour consciousness between aborigines and whites. Success in the ultimate assimilation into the white community, however, can only be achieved when the aborigine proves his independence, moral responsibility and reliability. This, of course, also calls for a measure of toleration on the part of the white community.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

When the general census was taken on 30th June, 1947, information was collected as to the number of aborigines residing in the various States of the Commonwealth. The following figures were supplied for New South Wales:—

Caste.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Full-blood .....	546	407	953
Mixed blood.....	5,498	5,109	10,607
Total.....	6,044	5,516	11,560

Full-blood aborigines who were civilised or semi-civilised and who were either in employment or living in proximity to settlements were enumerated at the census of 1947, but no record was obtained of the few nomadic aborigines.

As at 30th June, 1949, a total of 2,388 aborigines resided on the eighteen Stations under the Board's control, representing a decrease of 96 persons compared with the previous year. On Reserves, excluding Stations, the total was 2,585, representing an increase of 434 persons.

Detailed figures for the individual Stations and Reserves are included in Appendix "A" and Appendix "B," respectively, at the end of this report.

## STAFF.

The Board takes the opportunity of expressing appreciation of the loyalty and devotion to duty displayed by staff, both at Head Office and in the Field. Only with the co-operation of each individual officer could the Board achieve the results exemplified by this Report.

The staffing position on the Stations has been satisfactory. Certain transfers and appointments were effected as a result of resignations. There have been difficulties in maintaining adequate domestic staffs at the Children's Homes.

Managers are still performing teaching duties at Jervis Bay, Moonahcullah, Roseby Park and Walgett. Further representations were made to the Education Department for the appointment of a full-time trained departmental teacher to the four aboriginal schools abovementioned. At Pilliga and Cowra, school teaching duties are performed by the Matron.

**Welfare and Educational Officers.**—The Board seeks to foster in the aborigine a realisation that he may, and should, become civic-minded, actively participating in the civic, economic, cultural and social life of his fellow citizens for the common good of the community as a whole. By so doing he assists materially in breaking down the barriers which prejudice has built up between the white and black people.

As an earnest of its desire quickly to assimilate the aboriginal people as an integral part of the community, the Board has appointed Area Welfare Officers and has others in training. The Board has in mind division of the State into a number of geographical areas. Each of the areas is to be under the direct supervision of an Area Welfare Officer who will, in effect, represent the Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare in such area. He will have his headquarters at some convenient place and may later have an associate officer, as it is felt that the needs of the aboriginal people in each area will be more adequately met with two officers in each area.

The Public Service Board invited applications early in 1949 for the appointment of two trainee educational officers. The response was not wholly satisfactory and the Public Service Board was able only to make one appointment. This appointee is a young quarter-caste aboriginal lad who has passed his Leaving Certificate examination. He commenced studies at the Sydney Teachers' College in March, 1949. When this lad's studies are completed and he has been trained at the Board's office in aspects of the work upon which he will be engaged, his task will be to develop a more satisfactory relationship between the normal education of aboriginal children and social life of the community on Stations.

**District Welfare Activities.**—The immediate plan of the Board is to partition the State into four Areas. A Welfare Officer is to be assigned to each Area, and, in fact, two Areas are already being served. It may be some time before the four Areas are fully staffed, but the training of personnel

is proceeding systematically. The Area Welfare Officers will devote their energies primarily to the assistance and guidance of aborigines in their districts. They will carry out routine inspections of Stations and Reserves at regular intervals. These duties, however, will take in not only the exercising of a general oversight of Aboriginal Stations and Reserves within the Areas allotted to the Area Welfare Officers, but also the general welfare of people of aboriginal descent wherever they may be residing.

At the close of the period under review, Welfare Officers were operating in two regions which might briefly be described as the North Coast and North-west Areas of the State. The headquarters in these cases are Casino and Moree, respectively.

During the year, visits were made to the office of the Casino Welfare Officer by some 250 aborigines who sought advice mainly on personal problems. Employment was found for the few aborigines out of work. The Welfare Officer attended the Courts and at times took an active part in the case as the aborigines' next friend.

Visits were made by the Welfare Officers to Stations and Reserves situate within their Area. In addition, aborigines living privately in homes in the town were visited. The Welfare Officer gave a number of public addresses throughout the year.

#### ASSISTANCE TO ABORIGINES TO ACQUIRE THEIR OWN HOMES.

Action to assist persons of aboriginal descent in their endeavours to become assimilated into the general community was further handicapped during the year because of the acute housing shortage and the general lack of materials and labour. The Board has encouraged aborigines, particularly those of lighter caste, to live independently of the Board's control and to become merged with the general community.

In order to impress the aboriginal people with a sense of social responsibility a weekly rental is now being charged to all aborigines occupying new residences on the Board's stations and reserves. Rentals have been fixed at 15s. for a two-bedroom residence, and 17s. 6d. for a three-bedroom home. The charge is to apply to new homes, whilst an appropriate charge is to be made for existing cottages of a reasonable standard. In the case of tenants who are not in a financial position to pay rent at the rates laid down, the Board's policy is that each case should be considered on its merits.

So far as encouragement of aborigines of lighter caste to live outside the Board's control is concerned, the ideal arrangement would be to finance a number of aborigines to enable them to obtain homes on allotments in certain country towns. The Treasury has provided a small sum of money to enable the Aborigines Welfare Board to purchase one or two blocks and build homes thereon, but, owing to difficulties in obtaining suitable blocks, this scheme was not developed to any degree during the period under review.

*The New Homes.*—It is estimated that some 600 to 700 homes are required for the present needs of the aboriginal people. It has not been possible up to the present, however, to complete more than approximately 10 per cent. of the number, but the building programme has been established and is steadily being pursued. Plans of the cottages prepared by the Government Architect on the Board's behalf cover two and three-bedroom units of modern design and incorporating also a kitchen with fuel stove, living room, bathroom and laundry. These homes will be established on Aboriginal Stations and Reserves, and also in country centres on the principle of private ownership. Other facilities, such as recreation halls, schools, stores, medical block and churches will also be provided.

Provided the Board is supplied with adequate funds, year by year, it is anticipated that the objective of providing good homes for every necessitous aboriginal family will be achieved within the next decade.

A church and a social hall are regarded as essential factors to the development of social progress amongst the aboriginal people on reserves. This must be regarded as an important contribution to preparation of these folk for their eventual assimilation.

#### EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.

The Board is now empowered to issue to any aborigine, or person apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood, a certificate exempting him or her from the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act and the Regulation thereunder. This amendment to the Act was framed in order that the more advanced aborigines might be given an opportunity to free themselves from the restrictive sections of the Act and to assume full status as citizens of the State.

Ordinarily the Commonwealth Government does not grant Old Age, Invalid and Widows' Pensions or Maternity Allowances to aborigines possessing a preponderance of aboriginal blood. Similarly, an aborigine who resides on a Reserve, is not eligible to receive the Old Age, Invalid or Widows' Pensions. If, however, any aborigine of the above categories is granted an Exemption Certificate and removes himself from the Board's care, such aborigine may become eligible to receive these social benefits from the Commonwealth Government.

During the year ended 30th June, 1949, sixty-one applications for Exemption Certificates were dealt with by the Board, as under:—

Exemption Certificates granted .....	47
Exemption Certificates declined .....	6
Exemption Certificates deferred .....	8

During the year no certificate was cancelled.

#### ABORIGINAL WARDS.

The Courts committed twenty-six children to the care of the Board during the year. The children were placed as follow:—

Kinchela Boys' Training Home .....	12
Cootamundra Girls' Training Home .....	5
Boarded out with approved aboriginal families	8
Admitted to denominational institution .....	1

Two children were discharged from the care of the Child Welfare Department and transferred to the control of the Board. They were both placed in employment as apprentices.

Two children were committed to the care of the Child Welfare Department for offences whilst at the Board's Home. The Board assumed control of nine children under Section 11D (1) (a) of the Aborigines Protection Act. They were placed as follows:—

Admitted to Kinchela .....	4
Admitted to Cootamundra .....	1
Admitted to Bomaderry .....	3
Boarded-out with approved aboriginal family ....	1

Five wards were released from the Board's control and returned to the care of their parents.

#### EMPLOYMENT OF WARDS.

The oversight and general welfare of aboriginal wards in employment have continued to receive careful attention by the Board's administration. The Board's Welfare Officers, Inspectors of the Child Welfare Department, or local Police in a few remote centres, acting on behalf of the Board, regularly inspect the conditions of employment and attend to the wards' needs and personal problems.

Children who have been committed to the care of the Board as wards are maintained at the Board's institutions until they reach approximately 16 years of age. Upon leaving school the boys are given some elementary instruction in rural work and the girls in domestic work; then they are placed in employment with approved employers and under approved apprenticeship conditions.

At the close of the period under review, eighteen wards—eight boys and ten girls—were in employment throughout the State under conditions governed by the Regulations.

The Board considered provision of a hostel for the accommodation of aboriginal wards in employment during holidays or whilst awaiting re-employment, and inspected a number of properties, with a view to purchasing one suitable for such purposes.

#### LABOUR CONDITIONS—EMPLOYMENT.

The Board insists that aborigines resident on Stations and Reserves shall be urged and assisted to seek and remain in steady employment. The employment position with regard to such persons has continued to be very satisfactory. With the current high rates of wages aborigines now have opportunities, which they do not perhaps possess to the same extent in normal times, to save money. It must be admitted, however, that many aborigines still manifest little stability and ambition. A changed attitude can only be brought about by a long process of education and training, coupled with a more tolerant attitude on the part of the white employer. A measure of success has already been achieved in this direction by the Board's Welfare Officers, and there is little doubt that more will be accomplished as the welfare work is extended.



The monthly reports from stations show that the percentage of employed aborigines during the year under review is about the same as that which obtained in the previous two years, namely, in the region of 95 per cent. Most of the able-bodied men are absorbed into local industries, such as timber-getting, saw-milling, farming, main roads construction, fishing, railway permanent-way maintenance, etc. The men enjoy award rates of pay for the work they are performing, and on the whole are treated in exactly the same way as white employees. The comparative table hereunder shows the figures in respect of the last quarters of the years 1947, 1948 and 1949:—

Period.	Able-bodied Men on Stations.		
	Number in Residence.	Number in Employment.	Percentage in Employment.
April-June, 1947...	538	505	93.8%
April-June, 1948...	497	469	94.3%
April-June, 1949...	504	484	96%

#### HEALTH AND HYGIENE.

The general health of aboriginal communities throughout the State has been maintained at a satisfactory standard, particularly on the controlled settlements. It is inevitable that standards of nutrition and personal hygiene may not be quite so good amongst some of the less responsible people who live in towns and in camps away from supervision, but the advent of welfare officers who will visit these people more frequently in the future will help materially in improving the position.

The incidence of venereal disease is not serious, and although it does exist to a small extent in some groups, it can be truthfully stated that the percentage proportion to which venereal disease occurs is probably no higher than amongst the white community generally. At one or two centres where the disease is known to exist active steps have been taken to ensure proper remedial treatment, and in no case can the problem be regarded as dangerous.

An outbreak of scabies and other skin ailments occurred at one or two settlements where supervision had not been provided. This was obviously due to lack of proper personal hygiene, due to difficulty in obtaining water. These outbreaks have since been cleared up, and in one instance, namely, Baryulgil, an official supervisor has been appointed.

Wherever practicable, vegetable gardens and milk supply were maintained on Stations. Managers have always endeavoured to instill in the minds of the aborigines the vital need for correct diet.

As stated in previous reports, aborigines requiring medical attention and treatment at hospital are given the same facilities as those available to indigent members of the white community. Where maternity facilities are not available at a public hospital the hospital authorities are required to arrange for such facilities to be provided at a local private hospital.

Appreciation is expressed for the valuable help and advice given by the Department of Public Health, the Baby Health Centre Nurses and, in one or two cases, by the Bush Nurse.

Aborigines in financial circumstances are required to meet the cost of their own dental attention, but those unable to pay by reason of age, infirmity, or indigency are afforded dental attention at the Board's expense. Surveys were made at a number of Stations and Homes of the dental position and attention was given where necessary.

During the year, special steps have been taken, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health, to eradicate hook-worm at the Tabulam Aborigines Reserve.

#### AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY.

Where conditions have been favourable the Board has encouraged and developed agricultural activity on Aboriginal Stations. The aim is to make communities self-supporting in respect of commodities such as milk and vegetables. Aborigines, however, must not look upon these as hand-outs, as such would militate against the Board's policy of leading the people towards the goal of independence.

It has been customary on those Stations where a productive community vegetable garden is maintained to make a distribution from time to time to every family, irrespective of ration issues. On some Stations, however, when voluntary assistance has been requested to work the community vegetable garden, or to harvest a crop, the aborigines have not responded.

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As against this, local greengrocers who visit the Stations have been well patronised. The Board has decided, therefore, that, in future, the following procedure is to be followed:—

- (1) Vegetables are to be distributed, free of charge, only to necessitous cases, i.e., to those in receipt of a ration issue by virtue of their being aged, infirm or indigent.
- (2) Families in receipt of an adequate income are to be excluded from gratuitous distribution, but may purchase vegetables at a nominal cost, after the needs of recipients under (1) have been met.

During the year, local Dairy Officers and Veterinary Officers attached to the Department of Agriculture again assisted the Board with advice on problems associated with the dairy herds and livestock generally on the various Stations.

#### EDUCATION.

The Education Department has now approved of the admission of aboriginal children, excluding those living on Stations and Reserves and for whom separate facilities have been provided, to State Public Schools. In this connection Headmasters are instructed to refer for Departmental decision, applications for admission which they consider should be refused or deferred. It should be pointed out, however, that children of parents who have been granted a Certificate of Exemption are enrolled without question. This is a definite step forward in breaking down the former attitude on the part of many local communities, which amounted to colour prejudice and an objection to dark children being taught side by side with white children.

The question of provision of facilities for the accommodation and care of aboriginal boys and girls who are attending Secondary Schools and who would avail themselves of secondary education, if accommodation were made available, is receiving attention. A survey of the aboriginal children throughout the State is being made with the assistance of the Department of Education, to determine which of them would be affected by the proposal. The Board is convinced that aboriginal children who have proved their aptitude should have the opportunity of pursuing secondary school studies. In this connection consideration has been given to the provision of boarding facilities for aboriginal girls and boys attending secondary schools.

During the year three half-caste lads from the Kinchela Boys' Training Home enrolled at Kempsey High School, whilst twelve girls from the Cootamundra Girls' Training Home attended the local High School.

#### SOCIAL AND SPORTING.

The Board considers that the establishment on the Stations of social clubs is desirable in the interests of co-ordination of social, cultural and sporting activities, and to provide a permanent medium whereby such activities may be fostered. It feels that the ideal is for the Manager to take the initiative in establishing such clubs and become the leader thereof.

The year was marked by a measure of success in establishing social and sporting clubs.

Regular dances were held at Boggabilla Aboriginal Station and a tennis club was organised. Fourteen artists from the Station contributed towards the success of a concert held at Goondiwindi. Favourable mention was made in the Press of the contribution made by the Station residents.

Children from the Woodenbong Aboriginal Station were successful in the Clarence River District School Sports, winning three challenge cups and two shields. Preparations were being made for a dance and children's sports to which aborigines from surrounding areas would be invited. Proceeds were to be devoted to the provision of a tennis court.

At Bellbrook Aboriginal Station, also, a sports club was formed and dances held to raise money to equip a tennis court.

Cumerogunga Aboriginal Station established a social club. This has been the means of organising dances and socials which have given pleasure and enjoyment to the aboriginal people.

At Roseby Park, Burnt Bridge and Wallaga Lake the Station football clubs have competed in their district grade competitions and all are doing very well.

The foregoing indicate the movement towards catering for the leisure of residents of Aboriginal Stations in an organised way. The brief reports given do not represent a full picture of social and recreational achievements, but serve to demonstrate the growing realisation of the importance of organised recreation.

## RELIEF AND BENEFITS TO ABORIGINES.

The Board has continued to care for aged, infirm, indigent and incapable aborigines. Every able-bodied aborigine, however, is expected to make a genuine attempt to provide for himself and his family.

The following is a brief summary of the benefits derived by aborigines from the Board:—

**Housing.**—The Board's policy is to provide aboriginal families on Stations and Reserves with satisfactory housing. Proper living standards are essential if pride and self-respect are to be developed. During the year special efforts were directed towards maintaining existing dwellings in a fit state for habitation, and good progress was made with the erection of new dwellings on certain Stations.

At the new Murrin Bridge Aboriginal Station there are forty modern cottages. The prevailing difficulties in availability of labour and materials have retarded the Board's programme. Elsewhere in the report will be found details of building activity, including provision of new homes and alteration of existing dwellings.

**Rations.**—Aged, infirm and indigent aborigines receive full scale rations. The scale of food is planned in accordance with recommendations by the Department of Public Health. In addition to the approved issue, aborigines whose circumstances so require are provided free of charge with a variety of fresh vegetables in accordance with available supplies grown on the Stations.

The number of rations issued on the various Stations at the beginning and at the end of the year is shown in Appendix "A." 11.3 per cent. of the total population on Stations received rations during the year 1948-49, as compared with 15.2 per cent. in the year 1947-48. The figure for the year 1946-47 was 14.7 per cent. It will be seen that there has been a small decrease in aborigines requiring rations. This, of course, is attributable to their absorption into employment. The reduction is even better than the percentage reduction indicates, when it is realised that a large number of ration recipients are aged, indigent or otherwise incapable of work.

A return of the rations issued to aborigines residing on Reserves at the beginning and end of the year will be found in Appendix "B." This return reveals a considerable decrease when compared with the previous year's figure of 204. This situation is no doubt attributable to the fact that plenty of work is available.

**Clothing.**—Aged, indigent and other dependent aborigines receive clothing issues on the basis of two outfits per annum—one each for summer and winter. The table hereunder shows the number of recipients during 1948-49 compared with the previous two years. It will be noted that there has been a considerable decrease in the number of recipients for the past year. It is apparent that this state of affairs is attributable to the abundance of work available and the general high rates being paid for labour. This situation has brought into industry persons who, under less favourable circumstances, may find difficulty in competing for available jobs.

Outfits.	Number of Outfits Issued to Aborigines.								
	Male.			Female.			Total.		
	1946-47.	1947-48.	1948-49.	1946-47.	1947-48.	1948-49.	1946-47.	1947-48.	1948-49.
Summer .....	168	120	103	230	201	200	398	321	303
Winter .....	135	105	34	202	179	71	337	284	105
Total .....	303	225	137	432	380	271	735	605	408

**Blankets.**—The established practice of supplying blankets to aborigines who are in need has been continued. The comparative figures are as follows:—

Place.	Number of Blankets Issued.		
	1946-47.	1947-48.	1948-49.
Stations .....	460	313	330
Reserves .....	117	65	117
Total .....	577	378	447

**Medical Attention.**—Drugs and medicines are supplied, free of charge, to resident aborigines on Aboriginal Station. Each Station is provided with a medical treatment unit, including dispensary. A member of the staff is either a trained nurse or has had some experience in medical care. Cases requiring hospitalisation are admitted to the nearest public hospital.

**Baby Outfits.**—Full-blood and three-quarter caste mothers who, by reason of their caste, are ineligible to receive the Maternity Allowance, are supplied with baby outfits upon application, free of charge. With the substantial increase in the Maternity Allowance, which was intended to cover the expenses of confinement, it is expected that mothers who receive the allowance shall meet the full cost of the outfit. The cost varies, and at the close of the year under review was approximately £4 15s. 0d. This figure is considered reasonable, having in mind the probable cost of an outfit purchased independently. It has therefore been decided that in future, except in the case of a woman not entitled to the Maternity Allowance by reason of caste, the full cost is to be charged. If the cost of the outfit is paid for before confinement the cheque for the Maternity Allowance will in future be forwarded to the applicant direct from the Office of the Director of Social Services. In those cases where a baby outfit has been supplied and payment has not been made prior to the birth of the child, arrangements are made with the Director for the amount of the outfit to be deducted from the Maternity Allowance. The balance is remitted to the applicant.

During the year, 101 outfits were supplied to aboriginal mothers, being two less than the number supplied last year.

**Christmas Cheer.**—The Board again joined with the aboriginal folk on Stations and Reserves in making Christmas, 1948, a happy season. Parties were arranged by the people on Stations, with the co-operation of Managers or Supervisors, and on some of the more remote Reserves the Police, aided, perhaps, by local well-wishers, organised festive functions. All aged, infirm people and indigent families were provided with the necessary ingredients with which to make their Christmas puddings, and special tobacco issues were handed out.

## SOCIAL SERVICES.

**Child Endowment.**—Any aborigine who has the care, control and custody of more than one child under the age of 16 years, may claim Child Endowment. In each new case the Board furnishes a recommendation to the Commonwealth Authorities indicating whether Child Endowment should be paid direct or administered by the Aborigines Welfare Board on the endowee's behalf. Such recommendation follows consideration of reports obtained from local officers regarding the character and reliability of the person concerned to expend endowment moneys wholly for the benefit of the children in respect of whom it is paid. The following table gives particulars of the cases administered by the Board during the year ended 30th June, 1949, and during the two previous years:—

Year ended 30th June.	Amount received from Commonwealth for administration.	Number of cases administered at beginning of year.	Subtract.		Add.		Cases administered at end of year.
			Cases expired, etc.	Cases changed to direct pay.	Cases reverted to Board's control.	New cases.	
1947 .....	£ 11,737	242	20	44	9	13	200
1948 .....	11,938	200	20	19	15	23	199
1949 .....	13,152	199	26	24	15	12	176

**Pensions.**—Age, Widows' and Invalid Pensions are payable by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to those aborigines whose circumstances satisfy the requirements of the Commonwealth Act. Aborigines who have a preponderance of aboriginal blood, however, are not eligible to receive pension payments and the Commonwealth Authorities also will not grant payment of pensions to aborigines whilst they are resident upon Government Stations and Reserves. A pension may be granted, however, to an aborigine in possession of a Certificate of Exemption.

The Board favours adoption by the Commonwealth of a more liberal attitude in the granting of pensions to those aborigines who, in the Board's view, should be under some measure of control and who may elect to reside on a Station or Reserve. This is in line with the policy adopted by the Conference of Aboriginal Authorities held in Canberra in February, 1948. Conference resolved:—

"This Conference is of the opinion that full benefits under the Social Services Consolidation Act of the Commonwealth should be available to all aboriginals except



full-blood aboriginals living under primitive or nomadic conditions, and that Commonwealth legislation should be amended accordingly."

In common with other citizens of the Commonwealth, aboriginals, irrespective of caste or place of residence, are liable for the payment of income tax and the social services contribution, with the result that, in some instances, these people are required to contribute for benefits in respect of which a large number of them are, or would be, ineligible.

Three War Pensions and three Widows' Pensions were administered by the Board during the period under review.

*Maternity Allowance.*—The Commonwealth Government does not grant this allowance to mothers with a preponderance of aboriginal blood, but residence on an Aboriginal Station or Reserve does not disqualify. An aboriginal mother with a preponderance of aboriginal blood, if exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act, is, however, eligible to receive the Maternity Allowance. It is regarded as equitable—at least, so far as New South Wales is concerned—that the Maternity Allowance should be paid to all aboriginal mothers, and that the degree of aboriginal caste should not be a determining factor. Maternity allowance in respect of mothers possessing aboriginal blood was paid to the Aborigines Welfare Board for administration in one hundred and twenty-six cases, as against one hundred and fifty last year.

*Unemployment Relief.*—This Social Services benefit is not paid to an unemployed worker if he is a permanent resident on an Aboriginal Station. Previous remarks, regarding his liability for the payment of Social Services Contribution for a benefit for which he is ineligible, apply particularly in this instance.

*Hospitalisation.*—So far as New South Wales is concerned, all aboriginal persons are eligible for the Commonwealth hospital benefits.

#### CHILDREN'S HOMES.

Establishment by the Board of homes for the reception, maintenance, education and training of wards is provided for in the Aborigines Protection Act. A ward is a child who has been admitted to the control of the Board and committed to a home constituted and established under the Act. There are two such homes—the Kinchela Boys' Home and the Cootamundra Girls' Home.

The homes provide a medium whereby children may be reared in an environment calculated to lead to their development as good and useful citizens. The homes care for up to fifty children each, the ages ranging from 6 to 15 years. As indicated in last year's Report, the Board feels that the provision of further institutions is necessary. The objective lies in the establishment of adequate and suitable homes to enable a satisfactory grouping of the children committed to the Board's care so that they may be reared in a happy family atmosphere.

The Board does not possess an institution for children of pre-school age, and it has become necessary, with considerable difficulty, to have children coming within such category admitted to private families or private denominational homes. The desirability for establishing a special home for these very young children is at present being made the subject of special investigation. The fact must be borne in mind that infants under the age of twelve months should be specially catered for in such a way as to meet their needs and giving highly skilled and specialised attention to their physical health.

*Kinchela Boys' Training Home.*—This Home stands in 32 acres of good agricultural river flats, located 16 miles from Kempsey. Twenty-five acres are given over to the training of the senior boys in elementary practical farming and dairying, prior to their transfer to employment as apprenticed wards. Plans are now being formed with a view to introducing manual training classes as soon as the services of a qualified instructor can be obtained.

At 30th June, 1948, the Home had the lowest enrolment on record, namely, thirty-two boys. The number of boys enrolled in June, 1949, was forty and the average throughout the year was thirty-nine. During the year there were sixteen admissions and eight discharges. Of those discharged four were placed in employment, one was retained at the Home and employed in the capacity of cook's assistant, and one boy was restored to the care of his mother. Two boys were transferred to the Child Welfare Department and committed to the Mount Penang Boys' Training School.

The health of the boys during the year has been exceptionally good. No infectious cases were reported. The Government Medical Officer examines the boys twice annually and he stated that he was very impressed with the general health and nutrition. The Home was visited also by a dental surgeon who treated all cases which called for attention.

During the year the new farm building was completed. The general appearance of the Home buildings was considerably improved following painting and renovations by the Board's Maintenance Officer. Bathing and washing facilities are excellent and the sanitation is satisfactory. The water supply has been greatly improved by the enlarging and re-timbering of the main water supply well.

All boys attend school until they reach the age of 15. Three boys enrolled at the High School at Kempsey in February, 1949. Whilst the educational standard of the boys generally may be slightly below average, individual lads have displayed high intelligence and aptitude. A puppet show was organised by the Headmaster, whilst the boys had an opportunity to display their talents in singing and acting. Basket-making and other handwork are also taught, with good results.

The aim at Kinchela is a balanced programme of recreation and work. The very fine swimming pool erected a year ago is a wonderful asset. This, of course, is in constant use during the summer months, and the majority of the boys are good swimmers. The boys also find recreation in the gymnasium, in fishing, and in seasonal competitions. Outings arranged included visits to a rodeo and to the beaches. Indoor games and boxing are provided as well as the exhibition of cinematographic films, which are shown weekly. The boys appreciate the films.

Religious instruction has not been neglected. Services are conducted weekly by the Home Chaplain, monthly by the Methodist Minister, whilst Sunday School is arranged by a member of the staff each week. Parties of boys have been taken to the local church services at Kinchela and Jerseyville.

An innovation has been the introduction of a House system. The boys are enthusiastic about this idea. The houses are styled Sturt, Oxley and Hume, with a House Captain as leader for each. Each House has its own distinctive shoulder badge. A shield is being made at the Home which will add interest to the competitions in which the respective Houses compete.

Ninety per cent. of the farm and vegetable produce required has been provided out of the Home resources, whilst production of stock fodder, for use of the animals at the Home, reached the following approximate totals:—

Lucerne hay .....	55 tons.
Sacchaline .....	25 tons.
Corn .....	100 bushels.

The condition of the live stock throughout the year was good. Periodically the herd has been inspected by the local Dairy Officer, and during February the herd was culled and surplus stock sold. Milk produced totalled 10,920 gallons, of which 6,020 gallons were consumed. Butter production was 1,872 lb., equal to an average of 36 lb. weekly.

*Cootamundra Girls' Training Home.*—The Cootamundra Home is located 2 miles from the township and caters for girls of school age. The number of girls resident at the Home at the beginning of the year was thirty-seven, and this had fallen to thirty-five at the close of the period. During the year there were nine discharges from the Home, five being found employment under apprenticeship conditions, whilst three were restored to their parents. The number of admissions was seven.

The general health of the inmates was again satisfactory throughout the year and all were well and happy at the close of the period. Two girls underwent a tonsillectomy operation and one girl had measles. Four were attended to in hospital, two for ear troubles, one for facial treatment and the other received treatment for a knee.

Seventeen of the girls attend the primary school, whilst there are eight in opportunity 7th class and four girls at high school. One girl passed the Intermediate Certificate Examination. The girls participate in sporting fixtures with their school teams. In summer they attend the swimming baths and compete in carnivals.

Picnics, including bus walking, are organised for the girls. The children were invited to full dress rehearsals of the dramatic society which has presented plays throughout the year. Quite often the girls are entertained at the local cinema.

Religious instruction has not been neglected and the girls have attended their respective churches whenever possible. In addition, there have been regular visits to the Home by two of the townspeople, who have conducted Sunday School.

The Home receives an appreciable amount of fresh vegetables from its own garden, whilst three cows and a number of fowls have assisted in no small way towards the upkeep of the establishment.

The staff position, which caused some concern last year, has improved in some measure, but still cannot be regarded as static. This class of work does not appear in these times to attract young women.

#### ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

Eighteen Aboriginal Stations were maintained by the Board during the year. On each, the management is vested in a Manager who resides on the premises and he is assisted by a Matron—with additional assistant staff on the larger Stations.

An Aboriginal Station consists of a community settlement embracing a home for each family, a school, ration store, recreation hall, medical treatment annexe and water supply. Where appropriate the community has its own dairy herd and vegetable garden. Church services are held in the recreation hall in most cases.

The fundamental purpose of aboriginal stations is to provide a home and refuge for those aborigines who would not be able effectively to fend for themselves outside the Board's care and protection, and to train them in the principles of citizenship so as to facilitate their ultimate absorption into the white community. Others, of course, prefer to live in the communal conditions found in the Stations. Because of the disadvantages which less advanced families would encounter, if thrown on their own resources, the Board does not foster any movement of such family units from its care and protection. At the same time the Board, in line with its policy of assimilation, does seek to encourage those aborigines who are of a superior type to break from the Station and make their own way in the world in line with the general community. Such aborigines would still be under the watchful eye of the Area Welfare Officer on his periodical visits.

The point is stressed that those aboriginal families who choose to remain on Aboriginal Stations are not spoonfed. All able-bodied men who can support their families are required to maintain their families from their earnings. The aged, sick and infirm, however, are provided with food, including special invalid food where necessary, medicines, blankets, tobacco and other comforts.

The following summary will indicate at a glance the number of Stations administered by the Board which fall under each population category. (Details of size of the individual Stations, together with population in each case, are given in Appendix "A".)

Over 200 residents .....	2 Stations.
Between 100 and 200 residents .....	12 Stations.
Under 100 residents .....	4 Stations.

Appendix "A" of this report shows that the total population on all Stations as at 30th June, 1949, was 2,388. This represents a decrease of 96 for the twelve months, and compares with a decrease of 46 in the previous year.

The table hereunder shows the figures in respect of births, deaths and marriages on the Board's Stations for the year. For the purpose of comparison the figures in respect of the previous year are shown in parenthesis:—

Births .....	104 (99)
Deaths .....	37 (37)
Marriages .....	14 (18)

#### ABORIGINAL RESERVES.

Aboriginal Reserves have not the amenities and improvements found on Aboriginal Stations. As in the case of the latter, however, they are areas set aside for occupation and usage by aborigines, but the settlements are not subject to the resident management of a Board's officer. As will be appreciated, aborigines who settle on such Reserves are ordinarily of the type who prefer to more or less stand on their own feet. As against this, however, experience has demonstrated that the general standard of living on Reserves does not approach that which is the rule on Stations.

The Board looks to the local Police authorities to exercise a degree of surveillance over conditions at Reserves, and reports are received at quarterly intervals. In some instances, the teacher in charge of the local aboriginal school occupies the position of non-resident Supervisor.

There is a list of inhabited Reserves in Appendix "B", showing opposite each Reserve the population and the corresponding figure for the previous twelve months. The aggregate population was 2,585, which compares with 2,151 in respect of 1947-48.

#### BUILDING ACTIVITY.

The total expenditure on erection of new buildings, structural repairs and maintenance of existing premises increased to £129,757 for the year. Last year the figure was £63,023. This reflects the extent of the Board's building programme.

The Board's itinerant Maintenance Officer carried out maintenance work, including painting and repairs, at Coraki, Bowraville and at Kinchela and Cootamundra Homes.

The most outstanding achievement of the year was the opening of the new Aboriginal Station at Murrin Bridge, near Lake Cargelligo. Costing over £65,000, the Station comprises forty cottages, a school and school residence, church, recreation hall, single men's quarters, pumping station and water service. The Station was officially opened in April, 1949, but before that time aborigines from the Old Menindee Station were being transferred to their new quarters. Murrin Bridge represents the first step by the Board in providing the aboriginal people with, and educating them to appreciate, better housing conditions.

Good progress was made with the erection on the existing Station at Taree of twenty-four new homes, additions to some of the existing cottages, a medical unit, recreation hall, etc. This work was almost completed at the close of the period.

At the present juncture the construction of the new Moree Aboriginal Station, involving the erection of twenty-four homes, staff residences, ration store, recreation hall, church, school and farm buildings, is approximately one-third completed. Progress on this work has been greatly retarded by difficulties experienced by the contractor in obtaining labour and materials.

The work of building twelve cottages, girls' quarters, sewerage and road-work at La Perouse was carried out during the year and is now nearing completion.

A complete building project was drawn up in respect of a new Station at Tabulam and a tender was accepted, but the work has not yet been started, owing to the contractor's difficulty in obtaining labour and materials.

At Cowra a rebuilding programme is well under way for twenty-four cottages, recreation hall, church, office, treatment room, farm buildings, etc.

The work of erecting twelve new homes, a manager's residence, recreation hall, medical treatment room, store, etc., at Cabbage Tree Island is about half completed.

At Quirindi, where the contract includes thirty cottages, a manager's residence, recreation hall, church, office and store, farm buildings, etc., the work is now nearing completion.

Other building works in connection with which planning is in hand, but commencement of which will be dependent upon availability of funds, are:—

*Wallaga Lake.*—Awaiting acceptance of a tender for recreation hall, store, fifteen cottages, additions and renovations to six existing cottages.

*Jervis Bay.*—Plans are ready for calling of tenders for manager's residence, office, treatment room, store, recreation hall, sixteen cottages, alterations and additions to school and domestic science room, boatshed and slipway.

*Nambucca Heads.*—Site planning about to be put in hand for staff residence and twelve cottages; also for road-work.

*Cubawee.*—Plans are being prepared for twelve cottages, recreation hall and road-work.

*Burnt Bridge.*—Plans and specifications prepared for reconstruction of entire Station, but approval is still being awaited for the calling of tenders.

*Nowra District.*—A decision was made in December, 1948, to close Roseby Park Aboriginal Station at Greenwell Point and to distribute the families in various South Coast towns in homes to be rented from the Board. A survey of the position is at present being carried out.

*Wellington.*—Action is at present being taken in an endeavour to secure building allotments within the town of Wellington for the erection of a number of aboriginal homes.

*Wilcannia.*—An investigation is now being conducted with a view to improving living conditions for aborigines at Wilcannia. It is intended to obtain a more suitable locality adjacent to the town for setting up acceptable small homes for the local aborigines. An endeavour will also be made to house a few of the better class families within the town itself.



**GENERAL EXPENDITURE ON BEHALF OF  
ABORIGINES.**

The sum of £207,294 was expended on behalf of aborigines in the period under review. Details are furnished in Appendix "C". £80,478 of this amount is in the nature of recurring expenditure, representing £71,940 direct expenditure and £8,538 expended by other Departments on the Board's behalf. The total expenditure of a recurring nature for the year represents an increase of £11,526 over the figure for the preceding twelve months. This increase is attributable to increased costs for salaries and wages, and for higher material costs.

The amount expended on building construction and associated works was £126,816, the cost of which is chargeable to the General Loan Account. Last year the expenditure in this connection was £60,874.

**CONCLUSION.**

The Board is indebted to other Government Departments for their co-operation and assistance on the Board's behalf during the year under review, and places on record its grateful appreciation to the following Departments:—

Public Service Board, Police, Public Works, Agriculture, Public Health, Lands, Education, Child Welfare, Chief Secretary's, Resumed Properties, Housing Commission and Government Stores.

In addition, thanks are expressed to those persons and organisations who have demonstrated a practical and sympathetic interest in the welfare of aborigines generally.

For and on behalf of the Aborigines Welfare Board in pursuance of the Board's resolution dated this 21st day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty.

C. J. BUTTSWORTH, Chairman.

A. W. G. LIPSCOMB, Executive Member.

## APPENDIX "A."

List of Aboriginal Stations.

Vital Statistics and Ration Recipients.

Station.	Area.	As at 30/6/48.		As at 30/6/49.		Statistics for year ended 30/6/49.		
		Population.	Ration Recipients.	Population.	Ration Recipients.	Births.	Deaths.	Marriages.
	Acres.							
Bellbrook .....	96	162	14	119	12	1	1	...
Boggabilla .....	457	210	24	221	36	6	1	1
Brewarrina .....	4,638	158	39	159	28	7	4	1
Burnt Bridge .....	613	295	24	248	21	17	10	2
Burra Bee Dee .....	623	86	4	67	1	1	1	1
Cabbage Tree Island .....	125	100	15	120	11	5	2	...
Cowra .....	31	125	48	127	9	5	1	2
Cumeroogunga .....	2,600	132	10	105	4	4	...	1
Jervis Bay .....	100	95	11	82	9	3	3	...
Moonahcullah .....	232	49	2	72	...	5	...	...
Murrin Bridge .....	937	162*	90*	175	51	4	1	...
Pilliga .....	150	85	15	55	10	7	1	2
Quirindi .....	220	174	1	168	1	8	1	1
Roseby Park .....	66	107	12	102	13	8	2	...
Taree .....	51	127	16	158	19	4	3	4
Walgett .....	337	147	30	139	28	4	...	...
Wallaga Lake .....	341	94	6	105	8	8	3	...
Woodenbong .....	126	176	18	166	10	7	3	1
<b>Total.....</b>	...	2,484	379	2,388	271	104	37	16

NOTE.—\*Menindee figures. Residents transferred to Murrin Bridge in April, 1949.

## APPENDIX "B."

## List of Aboriginal Reserves.

## Particulars of Ration Recipients.

Reserve.	Area.	As at 30th June, 1948.		As at 30th June, 1949.	
		Population.	Ration Recipients.	Population.	Ration Recipients.
	Acres.				
Balranald .....	140	30	2	44	...
Baryulgil (Settlement only) .....	40	66	4	107	...
Bourke .....	34	55	...	62	...
Bowraville .....	90	136	5	137	4
Brungle .....	320	38	6	64	2
Collarenebri (Camp only) .....	50	149	...	157	...
*Condobolin .....	16	118	15	74	...
Coraki .....	10	78	27	53	7
*Cubawee (late Tuncester) .....	24	73	...	75	1
Darlington Point .....	25	74	36	33	15
*Dubbo (Talbragar) .....	18	44	...	37	...
*Forster .....	19	74	...	70	...
Goodooga (Dennawan) .....	80	11	3	84	2
Goolagong .....	80	17	...	15	...
*Gulgambone .....	70	109	3	104	...
*Karuah .....	50	56	5	55	...
Kyogle .....	115	16	...	14	...
La Perouse .....	6	64	...	108	...
Macksville (Eungai) .....	20	4	...	8	...
*Moree.....	12	173	23	450	9
Mungindi .....	100	107	...	115	...
Nambucca Heads .....	70	87	4	139	...
Quambone .....	43	11	...	...	...
Rye Park .....	140	12	...	12	...
*Tabulam .....	100	115	16	69	16
Tibooburra .....	100	2	2	5	2
*Tingha (Long Gully) .....	15	32	...	69	...
*Ulgundahi Island (Maclean) .....	40	56	5	51	3
Uralla .....	100	15	...	14	...
*Walcha (Summer Vale) .....	107	35	4	33	5
*Wellington (Nanima) .....	100	50	19	70	16
Wilcannia .....	100	164	25	174	6
*Yass .....	9	80	...	80	4
Total .....	...	2,151	204	2,585	92

NOTE.—\* Signifies Aboriginal School on Reserve.



## APPENDIX "C."

Statement of Expenditure for Year ended 30th June, 1949.

*Expenditure incurred by the Board:—*

## Payable from Consolidated Revenue Fund—

	£	£
Salaries and Wages .....	33,795	
Maintenance of Buildings .....	3,171	
Transport Expenses .....	9,228	
Maintenance of, and assistance to, Aborigines .....	21,779	
Other charges .....	920	
Purchase of Plant and Equipment ..	3,047	
	<u>71,940</u>	

## Payable from General Loan Account—

New Buildings, Station improvements and Land Purchases .....	126,816	
	<u>198,756</u>	

*Expenditure incurred by other Departments  
on behalf of the Board:—*

Government Stores Department, for purchase of clothing, stores, stationery, and other supplies ..	5,124	
Department of Public Health, for medical fees, etc. ....	240	
Department of Public Works, for telephone services, etc. ....	732	
Resumed Properties Department, for sanitary services .....	2,292	
Government Printer, for Printing and Bookbinding .....	150	
	<u>8,538</u>	
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>£207,294</b>	

NOTE.—The above statement does not include £16,925 expended by the Department of Education for education of aboriginal children in native schools.